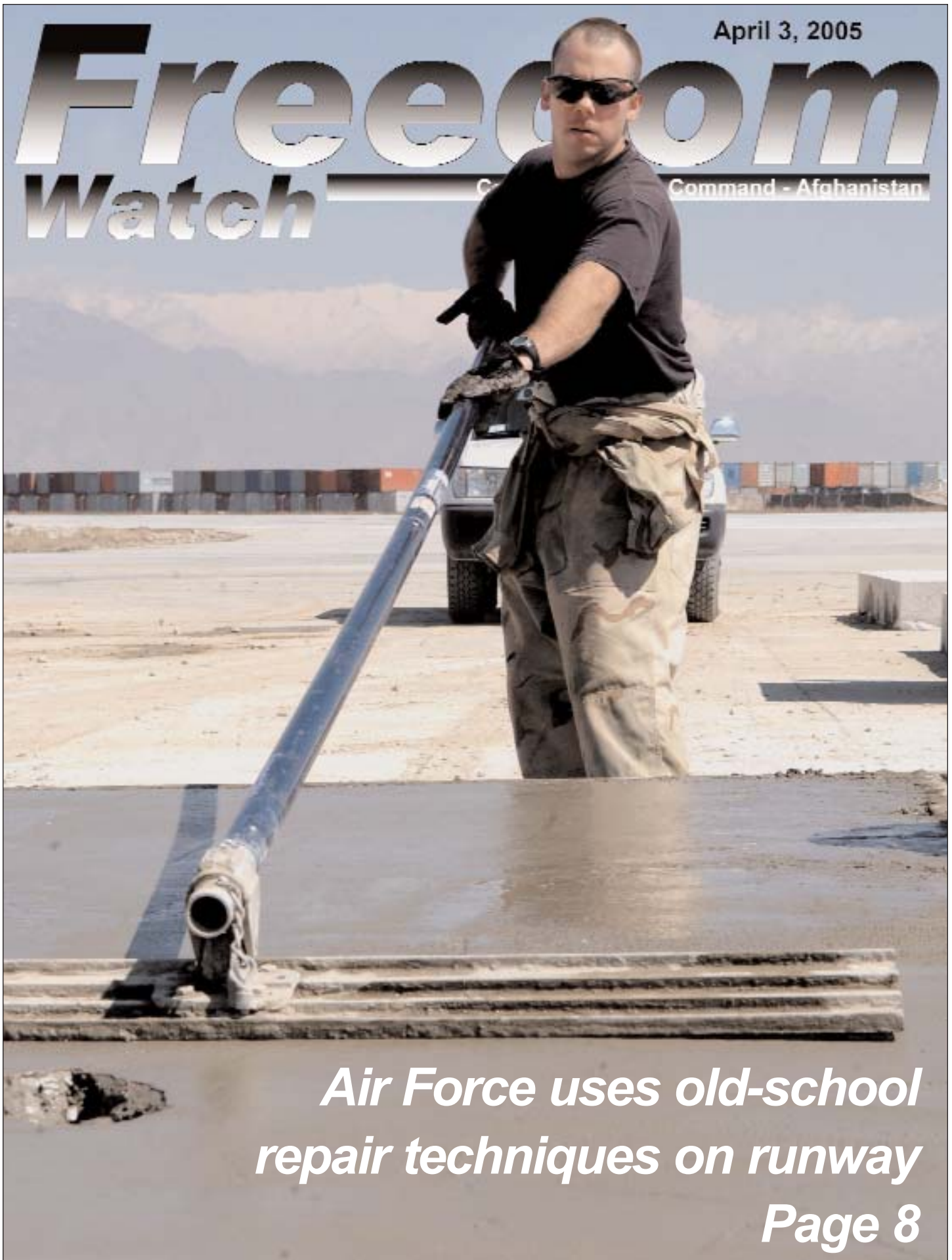


April 3, 2005

Freedom

Watch

Command - Afghanistan



*Air Force uses old-school
repair techniques on runway*

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Soldiers from the last frontier

The 20th Public Affairs Detachment, from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, has assumed responsibility for the Freedom Watch from the Soldiers of the 17th PAD. We will remain in Bldg. 425, Room 107, next to the Parwan PRT offices.

If you have a story idea, would like to submit stories and photos for publication in the Freedom Watch or would like to offer feedback, please contact the editor at 231-3338 or by email at Freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil.

Please keep in mind that all stories are subject to editing for length and content. Photos must be of high quality to be considered for publication.

Our goal is to do the same outstanding job of telling the Operation Enduring Freedom story that the 17th PAD has done for the past year.

We look forward to telling the story of all the great Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coalition partners who continue to make Operation Enduring Freedom a success.



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Freedom Watch

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Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 20th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 425, Room 107, Bagram Airfield. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

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MPs pass expertise to Afghans

Soldiers provide skills, gear to ANP; give citizens sense of local security

Story by
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan — Police tactical advisory teams are a vital part of the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan.

These special teams are part of the provincial reconstruction teams spread

“The refitting and training (have) really helped the police in the area. We’ve seen them (develop into) a dynamic police force.”

throughout the country.

In eastern Afghanistan’s Ghazni Province, the military police Soldiers work closely with the Afghan National Police in their area. They train and help equip the local police to provide security for the local population.



Sgt. James Adkins observes as police officers demonstrate how to search a person. The Soldiers are training the ANP to provide a secure environment for the local population.

“We teach many of the basics of police work,” said Adkins. “This includes basic law enforcement skills, handcuffing, searching people, riot control, how to enter and clear a building, levels of force, vehicle searches, how to operate checkpoints, and weapons safety, as well as other important police training.”

These classes teach the police how to provide security for the local people, in addition to their search for anti-Coalition militants.

“When the police are out on patrol, they know what to look for,” said Adkins. “They’re not just looking for bad guys. They interact with the community and see how everything is going. This makes them a more professional force.”

As the ANP receive more training and become more proficient in their mission, the population will see their own people providing the security.

“We take the police with us on all our missions,” said Adkins. “This shows the people that their own government is taking care of them. It gives more credibility to the Coalition when the people see us working with their own police force.”

“The refitting and training (have) really helped the police in the area,” said PTAT member



Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons

Staff. Sgt. Tom Hughes gives a bundle of gloves to an ANP officer. The gloves and other cold weather gear will help the police provide security to the population during colder months.

Sgt. Brian Jones. “We’ve seen them (develop into) a dynamic police force.”

The Soldiers on the PTAT have gained as much from the experience of training the ANP as the police have.

“Working with the police is great, because these people really want to learn and really want to be helped,” said Jones.

Giving the classes to the Afghan police has helped the Soldiers build confidence in their own ability.

“I’ve learned to do things I wouldn’t normally be able to do as a private,” said Pfc. Kevin Nummerdor, PTAT team leader. “When I’m giving these classes to the police, I’m honing my own skills and preparing to be an NCO.”

The opportunity to train the Afghan police force is very rewarding, said Adkins.

“We’ve seen the changes that have happened in the police since we’ve been here,” he said. “It’s really great to know we are making a difference.”

'Bobcats' search for enemy in Oruzgan Province

Story and photos by
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

DEH RAWOD, Afghanistan — A platoon of Soldiers rushed from the back of CH-47 Chinook helicopters, unhooked their vehicles from slingload kits, and embarked on a five-day mission to weed out anti-coalition militants March 9.

Dubbed Operation Endgame, the mission is the first combat operation since winter weather for the "Bobcats" of 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment. Sgt. 1st Class Victor M. Rivera, 1st Plt. platoon sergeant said that it is also the first time conventional forces have operated in the Deh Rawood area of southern Afghanistan.

Using "soft searches," the Soldiers, joined by Afghan National Army soldiers, worked their way through villages that have been known as ACM strongholds, searching for information about ACM and caches, and looking for ways they could help the people of Deh Rawood.

"This type of mission shows the people we're trying to help them improve their way of life," said Staff Sgt. Nuikealoha R.P. Amua, a squad leader from 1st Platoon, Company B. "It helps us to develop trust with the locals and (create) an overall sense of security."

During soft searches, Soldiers enter a village and speak to the local leaders. The elders accompany the Soldiers through compounds, segregating women and children to one area of the compound, while the Soldiers search every nook and cranny.

"By using the soft searches we show that we don't want to rattle the people and scare them," said Capt. Bryon D. Olsen, executive officer, Co. B. "It shows that we're willing to work with their customs and standards."

This compassion helps the Soldiers develop relationships with the Afghans, which often leads to obtaining information



Sgt. Mario Vega, 1st Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., searches an area of a compound in southern Afghanistan's Deh Rawod.

that can help them in their pursuit of ACM forces.

In one village, the Soldiers were led to an abandoned compound where a known ACM leader used to reside. Inside, Soldiers found equipment that could have been used in improvised explosive device attacks against Coalition forces. They also received information about the location of the ACM leader.

"It's getting harder and harder to find ACM members," said Olsen. "These types of searches are important because we never know what we're going to find."

"The soft searches help us get a lot of intel from locals," said Rivera. "It gives them the opportunity to approach us instead of using violence to get information."

The soft searches help the Soldiers get other important information as well.

"(They) give us an opportunity to get familiar with the surroundings and the people in an area," said Spc. Steven M. Winton, 1st Plt. medic.

They also give the Soldiers a chance to find out how they can help the people, said Rivera.

"We're out here trying to help them with (commander's emergency relief program) projects," he said.

These projects include wells, schools, roads and other things that the villagers are in desperate need of. Many of the villages either have no schools for the children, or the children have to travel hours to attend one.

"Everything that we're doing out here is helping the Afghan people stand up for themselves and live successful lives," said Amua.



Staff Sgt. Nuikealoha R.P. Amua prepares to enter a room in a compound in Deh Rawod. Amua and other Soldiers from 1st Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., searched compounds looking for evidence of enemy activity.

Gardez PRT Soldiers bring village emergency humanitarian assistance

Story and photos by
Spc. Dijon Rolle
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AZRA DISTRICT, Afghanistan — With less than half an hour on the ground, Soldiers from the Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team worked to distribute several bundles of blankets and boxes of food to an Azra District village.

The donations, delivered in aircraft from Bagram Airfield, were part of the PRT's emergency humanitarian aid mission. The items were delivered as residents here struggle to survive an unusually cold and snowy winter.

"It's very important that we do this, especially now in the winter when many of these areas and their residents are cut off from supplies and medical treatment," said Gardez PRT Commander Lt. Col. Brendan O'Shea. "For some, these donations could mean the difference between life and death."

Several deaths have already been reported in this area resulting from malnutrition and pneumonia.

O'Shea often accompanies the team of civil affairs and force protection Soldiers on their humanitarian aid missions and takes the time to speak with village elders and greet residents.

"These missions are a team effort between the Coalition and the government here. We are all working together to help the Afghan people and to meet an immediate need," he said. This is not the first time the Gardez PRT has flown in food, medicine and clothing to surrounding villages. More emergency donations like these may be needed as warmer weather slowly thaws the snow blanketing the region, causing floods.

"I think that this mission shows the local population that we care," said Cpl. Phillip Pawlukovich, a civil affairs specialist

with the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion.

"Even though it can't solve all of their problems, it's a humanitarian gesture from the Coalition to the people here," he said.

Pawlukovich explained that the team used aircraft to distribute the emergency aid because heavy snow and impassable roads made a convoy impossible.

"We couldn't get to the village. The area was basically cut off," he said.

In this case, because of the emergency circumstances, moving by air also saved valuable time. It took the team only a few hours to fly in, unload the donations from the aircraft and fly back out. A convoy would have taken 12 hours.

PRT soldiers plan to return to the area in upcoming weeks to provide more emergency aid to residents there.

"It's one of those days where you can't believe that you're fortunate enough to be able to do this, to help out," said Pawlukovich. "It's a good feeling and it's one that I'll remember for the rest of my life."



Soldiers from the Gardez PRT unload boxes of meal kits and bundles of blankets from their aircraft.

Enduring Voices

What do you hope to learn from this deployment?



Warrant Officer James S. Anderson
Co. D, 113th Avn. Rgt.
"I'm looking forward to flying in a different and challenging environment."



Pfc. Harold Campbell
111th ASG
"I want to learn more about computers and my job as an (information management officer)."



Cpl. Carl R. Curtis,
Co. D, 113th Avn. Rgt.
"I hope to gain a greater insight into the mission in Afghanistan."



Master Sgt. David A. Smith
111th ASG
"I'm looking forward to a unique challenge and expect to learn a lot, since I'm working in a job outside my usual field."

Engineers witness progress, reflect on past

Story and photo by
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

ASADABAD PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM SITE, Afghanistan — When the Asadabad Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers arrived in Afghanistan last year, they found builders using primitive techniques.

Since then, the team has worked side-by-side with contractors in eastern Afghanistan's Konar Province to not only develop the area, but also help the builders progress.

"When we got here, they were building mud and plaster roofs," said Capt. Will Boyd, former facility engineer. "Now, they are building reinforced concrete roofs with steel rebar."

Boyd likened the construction techniques to those used during the colonial days of the United States, when all work was done by hand. This exposure has given the engineers an opportunity to appreciate the handiwork of their ancestors and of the Afghans.

"You don't see this kind of work in the States," said Master Sgt. Darren K. Ah Mook Sang, PRT engineer. "We rely heavily on machines."

The use of machines allows builders to complete projects more efficiently, something they have gradually passed

on to the Afghans.

"Initially, they were mixing concrete on the ground," said Boyd. "This isn't effective for load-bearing construction, so we've had the contractors get machine mixers."

This also cuts back on the time and personnel required to construct a building.

At the same time, the Afghans are sticking to their own traditional methods of building things like doors and window frames by hand. The result is a unique design for each individual piece — artwork that the Soldiers can appreciate.

"I'm getting an appreciation for our grassroots — that first church built in town or the first schoolhouse," said Boyd.

And while the engineers are appreciating their roots, they say the Afghans are also appreciating what they're learning.

"Every project we contract out, we raise the standard," said Ah Mook Sang.



Afghan contractors use a cement mixer to make concrete and mortar at the Asadabad PRT site.

"And we try to teach them something new as well.

"Now, every time they finish a project they're so proud," he said. "They're always excited to show us what they've completed."

With the progress that is being made in Asadabad, the team knows that when they leave, they will leave behind a knowledge base that will help the Afghan people further develop their country.

"What we're doing now is helping them get on their feet to where they eventually won't need us," said Boyd. "And they'll still be able to continue this work on their own."

AAFES SERVICES HOURS OF OPERATION

Bagram Air Base

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| PX | Massage |
| 0230-1630 | 0400-1800 |
| Shoppette | Alterations |
| 0230-1630 | 0430-1430 |
| Burger King | Embroidery Shop |
| 0430-1730 | 0430-1430 |
| Food Court | Gift Shops |
| 0600-1630 | 0430-1430 |
| Coffee Shop | Sports Apparel |
| 24 hours | 0430-1430 |
| Barber Shop | Black Ops Store |
| 0430-1530 | 0430-1530 |
| Day Spa | |
| 0400-1600 | |

Kandahar Airfield

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| PX | Day Spa |
| 0500-1700 | 0500-1700 |
| Burger King | Alterations |
| 0430-1730 | 0500-1700 |
| Pizza Hut | Embroidery Shop |
| 0600-1800 | 0500-1700 |
| Subway | Gift Shops |
| 0600-1430 | 0500-1700 |
| Coffee Shop | Sports Apparel |
| 24hrs | 0500-1700 |
| Main Barber Shop | Black Ops Store |
| 0500-1700 | 0500-1700 |
| Lagoon Barber Shop | Leather Shop |
| 0300-1700 | 0500-1700 |

TF Phoenix

| |
|--------------------|
| PX |
| 0430-1630 |
| Barber Shop |
| 0330-1530 |
| Alterations |
| 0330-1630 |
| Coffee Shop |
| 24 hours |

Kabul

| |
|--------------------|
| PX |
| 0430-1630 |
| Barber Shop |
| 0330-1530 |
| Coffee Shop |
| 24 hours |

* All times in
Zulu/GMT

Maintenance support team keeps vehicles operational

Story and photo by
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

A S A D A B A D
P R O V I N C I A L
R E C O N S T R U C T I O N
TEAM, Afghanistan — Armed with wrenches, screwdrivers and wire cutters, the maintenance support team attacks a disabled vehicle at Forward Operating Base Asadabad.

Comprised of Soldiers and Marines, the team is responsible for maintaining all vehicles on the base in eastern Afghanistan's Konar Province.

"We support everyone on this post, making sure their trucks can stay on the road," said Sgt. William Merchant, a mechanic with the MST.

The team works together to ensure the vehicles are repaired as quickly as possible, so operations aren't hindered by a broken vehicle.

"There have been times we've been woken up in the middle of the night to fix a vehicle so that it's ready to roll the next morning," said Marine Sgt. Joshua Hawk.

Working with the Army for

the first time, Hawk said he's benefiting from his current assignment.

"The Soldiers are teaching me different ways to do things," he said. "I'm learning a lot of methods that I didn't know before."

The MST isn't just integrating different branches of service together; it's also integrating different tasks, ensuring everyone on the team is able to complete everyone else's job.

"My job is usually to rebuild starters and generators," said Spc. Gustavo Ruiz. "But there hasn't been a huge need for that out here, so I'm also learning how to do the other mechanics' jobs so I can help them out."

Ruiz's cross training includes taking engines, transmissions and differentials out of high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicles.

"It definitely helps the mission accomplishment," he said. "I'm learning to be flexible and how to do more than one job."

The mechanics aren't the only ones who are learning flexibility, however. The

units they support are also getting a similar lesson, since trucks can't always get repaired as quickly as they'd like.

"Sometimes we have to wait for parts," said Staff Sgt. Wayne Brooks, noncommissioned officer in charge of the MST. "The ones that are the biggest problems are the major components like engines and transmissions."

The team does its best to keep spare parts on hand, but weather often plays a role in resupply. To compensate for this, they consolidate parts from other deadlined vehicles to keep as many running as they can, said Merchant.

"We go through a lot of parts like water out here," he said. "We do what we have to in order to make things work as best we can."

In the end, the team's goal

is to keep all the trucks operational.

"We've got to keep the trucks up and rolling for the guys going outside the wire," said Brooks. "If we can't fix it, then a truck has to sit, and that means one less truck the unit has for a mission."



Pfc. Tyler Meyer, a maintenance support team member, removes a battery from a high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle in Asadabad. The MST is responsible for all the vehicles at the Asadabad PRT.



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Sgt. Matthew Aulisio, a team leader with Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., mounts a donkey to pose for a picture with the help of an interpreter during a mission in southern Afghanistan. Many Afghans use donkeys for transportation and to move personal belongings over long distances.

*Capt. Chris Barlow
2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt.*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Engineers 'close the gaps' on Bagram

Story and photos by

Capt. Catie Hague

455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Bagram's 9,800-foot runway is undergoing major repairs that began in March to maintain operations in and out of the busiest airfield in Afghanistan.

The 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron plans to spend 16 weeks to replace 28 shattered slabs of concrete using a runway repair method last used by the Air Force in the 1970s.

"Severe damage due to airfield operations and limited runway maintenance forced us to look for an immediate solution," said Maj. Bobbie Moore, squadron commander.

The answer was pre-cast concrete — concrete poured and cured in an alternate location, away from the runway, and put into place when ready.

Bagram's runway can't be shut down for an extended period of time due to mission requirements, explained Col. Warren Henderson, commander of 455th Expeditionary Operations Group.

"Since the concrete takes 21 days to cure to full strength," Major Moore added, "pre-casting was the only real option." The 455th engineers believe the pre-cast concrete method was last used by the U.S. Air Force in Germany in the 1970s.



Airman 1st Class Joshua Olson (left) and Senior Airman Mark Schwaiger, both of the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, pour concrete into the last of 28 runway replacement slabs destined for the 9,800-foot runway on Bagram.

By March 10, all 28 slabs had been poured. Each slab is 12 feet long, 13 feet wide and one foot deep, weighing approximately 23,400 lbs.

"The plan is to remove the damaged concrete on the runway just prior to placement of the new slabs," said Major Moore. "A flat-bed truck will transport the slabs to the flightline, and a 120-ton crane will lift and position the slabs in place." The runway will be useable as soon as the slabs are sealed.

This 16-week project has been broken down into three phases. Phase one will focus on 13 shattered slabs at the south end of the runway. Phase two will replace 13 shattered slabs in the middle and north end of the runway. Phase three will take care of two final slabs toward the north end of the runway. In addition, the

engineers will repair major cracks and seal joints throughout all three phases.

"Bottom line; The flightline has deteriorated significantly over the last several years, and in order to support heavy aircraft and increased traffic, critical repairs must be made both on and near the centerline," said Col. Rita Meyer, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group commander.

"This is the most critical repair project done on Bagram Airfield to date," she said. "While various repairs have been conducted on the airfield over the past three years, those repairs have not been enough to turn the overall condition of the airfield around. In fact, the structural capacity of the airfield has continued to deteriorate."

The runway itself was built by the Soviet Union in the 1950s.

"Huge chunks of concrete have come loose," said Henderson. "This situation required immediate attention. It has taken a team of civil engineers, airfield managers and pilots to make this happen with minimal impact on the overall mission."

In the end, the runway repair project will keep Bagram's flightline operational until a new runway is complete in June 2006.



Senior Airman Chris Bender of the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron levels the concrete in one of the pre-cast runway slabs destined for repairs to the 9,800-foot runway on Bagram.

Civil affairs, infantry troops bring security to region

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

GELAN, Afghanistan — An infantry battalion in Afghanistan has many missions - not only must they seek out and destroy the enemy, they must work to raise the quality of life of the population here.

A special team of civil affairs Soldiers is assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, to help them accomplish this mission.

"Most people in a theater such as this are not trained in civil affairs," said Maj. Eric Olsen, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion. "We advise the commanders and Soldiers on how to work with the people in the area. We also provide advice on cultural, linguistic, and political activities in the area."

Working jointly with a maneuver element helps these civil affairs Soldiers work with communities they would not be able to without the direct infantry support.

"We are involved in the day-to-day activities of the battalion," said Olsen. "We are equipped to go into non-permissive and semi-permissive areas because we are attached to a fighting unit."

The teamwork helps give the unit a greater working area. "Working with the battalion has been great," said Staff Sgt. Dagoberto Quiroz. "We've been able to

get to many far-reaching places in the area. We wouldn't be able to get out to these places without the infantry."

When the Soldiers visit a village for the first time they look for basic information about the facilities within the village.

"There are three things we look for first," said Quiroz. "We see if they have water, healthcare, and education."

After the Soldiers find out the needs of the village, they advise the infantry commander what projects would most help the people.

"We try to do immediate-impact type projects," said Quiroz. "We think of our work as grass-roots."

The battalion does smaller projects, said Capt. Todd Pegg, 3rd Bn. 116th Inf. Reg., civil military affairs officer.

"We try to do them fast. We concentrate on projects that shape the security environment. We don't build schools, but we provide supplies to the students. We're not able to build a municipal water system, but we will drill wells so the population has fresh drinking water."

The Soldiers work closely with Afghan leadership.

"We're trying to institute town hall meetings," said Quiroz. "So the village elders can voice their problems and the government can decide which projects they want to see completed. This way the people see that their government is taking care of them, not just the Coalition."

The work the civil affairs Soldiers do makes the security situation better for the Soldiers operating in the area.

When the population sees the Coalition helping them, they will be more cooperative with all the Coalition forces in the area, said Quiroz.

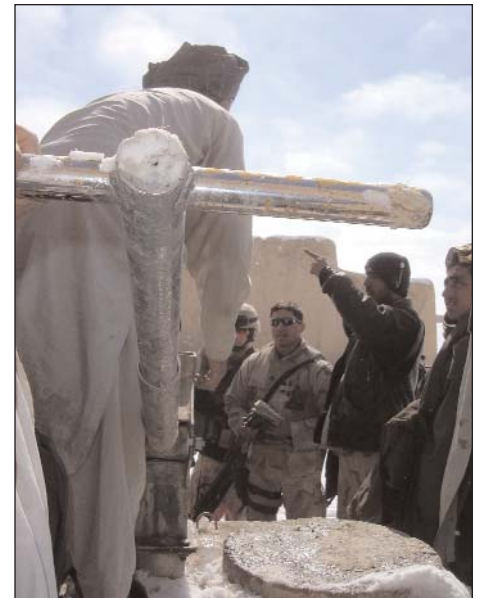
"We establish a good rapport with the Afghan leaders and population," he said. "The more projects we do, the better the rapport the Soldiers have with the locals."

Quiroz said that there are places that still harbor anti-Coalition militants.

"When these people hear about the good things we are doing for people in



While the Soldiers are speaking with the leaders of the village, Soldiers provide security from the turret of a vehicle. The Soldiers are always alert to any possible threat against Coalition forces.



Staff Sgt. Dagoberto Quiroz looks at the one working well in the village. The three other wells in the village have gone dry.



Staff Sgt. Dagoberto Quiroz, 450th Civil Affairs Bn., speaks with villagers in Gelan, Afghanistan. The civil affairs Soldiers find out if there is water, healthcare, and education available to the people.

other villages, they may rethink what they are doing. They have more pressure to police themselves. This makes it safer for the Soldiers." The safer the Soldiers are, the more they can help the local people.

Civil affairs helps keep the Soldiers safe and gives the commander another method to rid the area of ACM.

"It gives the commander a carrot as well as a stick," said Pegg.

"Helping the people provide for their own is the major fight at this point," said Pegg. "If we lose touch with the people they could easily become the enemy. There has to be a balance between combat operations and civil affairs."

LTF 191 assumes authority of logistics mission

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
CTF Thunder Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Logistics Task Force 191 assumed authority of the logistics mission from LTF 524 during a transfer of authority ceremony here March 16.

As LTF 524 concluded its mission, with the first casing of colors from a unit from the 45th Corps Support Group (Forward) out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, for service in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Col. Dave McKenna, commander of Joint Logistics Command, said the Soldiers of LTF 524 displayed the greatest commitment, courage, confidence and selflessness everyday.

All the Soldiers of LTF 524 had one thing in common. "While they were here, they served and they soldiered for each other. As combat service support Soldiers and health care providers in support of service of others, it became their personal affair of the heart," McKenna said.

McKenna said it was an honor and a privilege to serve with the Soldiers of LTF 524.

"You are the absolute best of the best. As you prepare to

leave Afghanistan, know that what you did was good, what you did was right, and what you did really made a difference," he said. "This country and the world are a better place, a safer place because of what each of you have done."

McKenna told LTF 191 that he had no doubt they were the best prepared unit in the U.S. Army to assume this mission.

"You have trained long and hard to get here. You arrive here with fresh legs, new thoughts and enthusiasm beyond compare," he said. "The challenge is now yours. Keep focused on the mission, care for each other and let soldiering together become your affair of the heart."

Lt. Col. Brian Haebig, commander of LTF 524, said the unit had a "wild ride" over the last 12 months.

"The officers and the Soldiers that you see here before you put together plans and executed missions that

**See *Transfer,*
next page**



Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Clark-Davis and Lt. Col. Thomas Langowski uncase the Logistics Task Force 191 colors during a transfer of authority ceremony with LTF 524 March 16.

Inspectors General course graduates second class

Story by
Lt. Col. Susan H. Meisner
Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Thirty-one Afghan officers took their places within the Ministry of Defense

General Staff and Medical Command upon graduation of the second Inspectors General Class March 2.

"IGs are like messengers of change," said Chief of the General Staff Bismullah Khan, graduation speaker. "You have the right to inspect and investigate."

These graduates join a previous graduating class of 59, and will fill positions at the four regional commands in Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Gardez and Herat.

Inspectors General serve as the "eyes, ears, voice and conscience of the commander," said retired U.S. Army

Col. Dale Litney, senior IG mentor for the Office of Military Cooperation — Afghanistan.

IGs assist soldiers and their families; inspect units looking for root causes of problems; conduct inquiries and investigations of alleged improprieties; and serve as teachers and trainers.

"We are trying to create a system that will work within Afghan culture," said Litney. "The roots (of their IG system) were in the Russian system. The Afghan officers have been very receptive to the training and they will make great role models."

See *IG,* next page



Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson

Graduates of the second IG course recite the Inspector General oath.



Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson

Chief of the General Staff Bismullah Khan addresses the students of the 2nd Inspectors General course during their graduation.

IG

According to Litney, after the first class graduated in September, the MOD tasked the new IGs with two major inspections at Kabul's Central Corps – the logistics and supply system and the Afghan National Army pay system.

"The progress of the IG sector has been very important. The inspection teams do very well; it's a hard job," said French Col. Herve Monticault, OMC-A IG mentor. "They have been well-accepted in the Army and in the Central Corps."

The graduation of this class is but one part of the ANA's transformation and improvement. "Our national army is not completed yet, and every one of us is trying to do something for the ANA to strengthen it and make it more self-sufficient," said Khan. "We are all looking forward to seeing the ANA capable of defending the country and strengthening the national unity, territorial integrity and national sovereignty. We are proud of you."

Transfer

weren't in any field manual, and just went about making it happen," he said.

Haebig said when the Soldiers arrived at FOB Salerno in May 2004, they found a base with no post office, finance office, personnel detachment or PX, and had to eat MREs for lunch since the dining facility only served two hot meals a day.

"These Soldiers adopted our battalion motto, 'Make a Way,' and started to take the time to truly make this place a better place," Haebig said. "Their only limiting factor to make this place better was their own imagination."

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Langowski, commander of LTF 191, said the service of LTF 524 is nothing short of magnificent.

"The combat service support and combat health support provided by your logistics task force ... were unmatched and unparalleled," he said. "Due to your efforts, the warfighter was provided unprecedented access to all services and classes of supply that greatly enhanced their ability to execute their combat mission."

Langowski said it is now LTF 191's turn to add to the history that LTF 524 started.

"We will do that by performing our mission to the utmost of our abilities, ensuring that Task Force Thunder and all the combat forces in Regional Command East always have the logistics capabilities to perform their mission," he said.

Afghan Maj. Razia was the sole female graduate of the class and the second female IG to graduate the course. She works at the assistance section of the MOD IG Department, where she receives or hears problems and reports them to her senior officers.

"It is a great honor for me and my family," said Razia about being one of a handful of women in the Afghan army. Of her IG co-workers, she said, "They are like my brothers and I am happy to work with them shoulder to shoulder."

"I stressed finding women for this class to address particular administrative problems, and a selection board selected her," said Fazil. "I congratulate her on her graduation and receipt of the IG insignia."

Following the ceremony and receipt of their certificates and insignia, the new IGs took an oath of office. They affirmed, "I accept the special obligations and responsibilities of the position freely, that I will uphold the standards for Inspectors General prescribed by regulation and that I will, without prejudice or partiality, discharge the duties of the office."

While the first class was jointly conducted by U.S. and Afghan instructors, Afghans were the sole instructors of this latest class.

"They were able to share their first-hand experiences in the field with this class," said Litney.

"We have learned a lot from this course, and we got positive results out of this term and will be able to put our knowledge into practice and serve the ANA," said graduate Col. Shair Ahmad.

Locked and loaded: Soldiers keep munitions ready

Story and photos by
Spc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Detachment



Spc. James Mitchell, 221st Ord. Co. ammo technician, draws grenades from a conex at the ammo supply point.

munitions that includes rounds for small arms weapons, crew-served weapons, aerial weapons and foreign munitions.

Since many units have their own munitions but are unable to keep them in their camps, the ASP has set aside storage areas for Coalition forces, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Army units.

"We keep a record of all munitions being issued out," said Bearman. "If the units didn't let us know when they were taking out munitions, we wouldn't be able to keep an accurate count of how much is actually being used or returned to the storage site."

Since April 2004, when the Soldiers of the 221st Ord. Co. arrived in Afghanistan, more than \$60 million of munitions have been handled by the ASP, which is more than 25 million rounds.

"The ASP is currently accountable for more than \$30 million worth of munitions," said Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Frost, ASP noncommissioned officer in charge. Keeping an accurate count of all ammunition is a critical part of the unit's mission.

Munitions are stored in sealed containers and bunkers to protect them from the elements, temperature and weather in Afghanistan can

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Soldiers of the 221st Ordnance Company live by the motto "A Soldier can survive on the battlefield for months without mail, weeks without food, days without water, minutes without air, but not one second without ammo."

The Soldiers are responsible for maintaining, issuing and receiving munitions to and from the units located at Bagram Airfield.

"We support all Coalition forces," said Chief Warrant Officer Rodney Bearman, ammunition supply point accountable officer.

With supported units being so diverse, the ASP maintains a variety of

change daily making this essential.

The way the munitions are handled and stored can have a large impact on how long they are usable, said Sgt. Kevin Masternak, ASP yard noncommissioned officer in charge. Handling the ammunition can be extremely hazardous and measures must be taken to reduce the risk.

"When the munitions are being moved inside the yard with a forklift, the operator needs to make sure the load is strapped down so the containers don't accidentally fall and cause a possibly hazardous situation," he said. "Also, to protect the operators, gloves and goggles are used when handling any munitions that could possibly leak, causing health problems to anyone exposed."

Another precaution that is taken when the munitions are being moved within the yard is ensuring the safety is set on all munitions, said Spc. Kerry Robinett, ASP ammunition specialist.

"Most munitions that are kept in the ASP have some type of safety on them to make sure they don't accidentally discharge and hurt anyone," she said. "However, there is one storage site that contains munitions that have been confiscated from Taliban members. Those munitions either don't have safeties or the safeties are missing. Safety in moving those munitions is extremely important."

Getting ready for units to pick up munitions is done the day prior to the scheduled pick up, said Masternak.

"The units are required to give us a twenty-four to forty-eight hour notice that they are going to pick up munitions," he said. "So, the morning before they are supposed to be there to pick up their issue, we get everything together to make sure they have the right amount of each type of munition they are requesting."

"Without the ASP in a location that is available to all units, they would have a harder time receiving the ammunition they need for missions and training," said Masternak. Keeping munitions ready for every unit is what the ASP is all about, said Frost. "Without us here doing our part, they couldn't successfully do their part to win the war on terrorism."



Spc. James Mitchell, 221st Ord. Co., moves a pallet of munitions from one lot to another within the ammo supply point.



Cpl. Satra Kitgareanirootama, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, browses through merchandise during a recent visit from the PX Rodeo at the Gardez PRT March 12.

Smiling Faces: PX Rodeo comes to Gardez PRT

Story and photos by

Spc. Dijon Rolle

17th Public Affairs Detachment

GARDEZ PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan — Razors, protein supplements and a magazine — any magazine — thought the marine.

Those were the top three items on Marine Cpl. David Myers' shopping list as he browsed the tables full of merchandise flown in from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Post Exchange at Bagram Airfield.

Myers, an optics specialist from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, was one of several troops from the Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team who came out to take advantage of the PX Rodeo.

The PX rodeo travels to remote military camps and forward operating bases throughout the country, providing troops access to goods they would normally find at a PX. The rodeo travels throughout the country each week, flying to one or two locations a day for a few hours before returning to Bagram for more supplies.

"It's easier for us to be able to come out here and buy little things that we

need, than to have to call home or wait until we can get back to Bagram," said Myers. "It's nice to see some familiar things. It kind of reminds you of home."

Rows of assorted candy, music CDs, socks, T-shirts and personal hygiene items greeted troops as they shuffled in and out of a small building at the PRT.

Even though Robert Lamp, PX Rodeo manager, was busy restocking merchandise and ringing up purchases, he took the time to welcome each customer.

"We're America's second Army," said Lamp. "It's almost like being in the military indirectly. We help the troops get the things they need, and it feels good to be able to come out here and do this for them. I wish we could stay longer."

Lamp has worked for AAFES for almost seven years and has also deployed to Iraq and Kuwait. He's responsible for flying out to each location with merchandise and setting up the field PX.

"Before we come out, we try to shoot an e-mail to someone here and find out what they might need or want us to bring," he said. "It's just a quick assessment to figure out what we need and how much of it."

Lamp says the most popular items sold at the rodeos are DVDs, protein supplements, cigarettes and Red Bull energy drinks.

In addition to the PX, Soldiers from finance, postal and legal units on Bagram Airfield were also on the ground to assist troops with personal business — everything from mailing packages home to drafting powers of attorney.

"Money is definitely a morale booster," said Spc. Arsalan Khan, a finance specialist with the 125th Finance Battalion.

Khan and other Soldiers from his unit take turns traveling with the PX Rodeo to provide pay support to troops. The two-person team does everything from fixing military pay problems to distributing cash advances.

"We know that we're helping these Soldiers out, and that's our job," said Khan. "Since they can't come to us, we go to them."

Postal Soldiers from the 841st Adjutant General Company (Postal) were also busy boosting morale.

"I'm really glad to see them," said Cpl. Philip Pawlukovich, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion. "I haven't had a chance to



Sgt. Hector Hermosillo Jr., Co. K, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, sorts through a stack of Marine Corps T-shirts at the PX rodeo.

mail anything home in a while, and I still had birthday presents that needed to get out."

Pawlukovich stood in the long line not far from Staff Sgt. Scott Stogdill of Task Force 168.

In addition to doing his share of shopping, Stogdill and several other Soldiers and Marines from the Gardez PRT helped to set up the rodeo.

"Just being able to shop or get cash or send stuff home — these are simple things that mean a lot to everybody here. So when they come we appreciate it," said Stogdill.



Pfc. Cassie Gonzalez, 841st Adjutant General Company (Postal), loads outgoing mail onto aircraft headed to Bagram Airfield.

Mission Planning

Success depends on proper planning

Story and photo by
Sgt. Jennifer Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment



Spc. Orion Martin carries his rucksack and radio as he starts a mission in Gardek District. In many areas it's impossible to use vehicles so a Soldier must carry everything with him. Mission planners must keep this in mind.

FIREBASE LAGMAN, Afghanistan—When a Soldier is breaching an objective, he is focused on that one moment in time.

He may not realize how the mission he's currently performing came into existence.

However, the planning of a mission is as important as its execution, said Maj. Todd Wilson, operations officer for the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment.

"When you are planning a mission, you must have several things in mind," he said. "First, the mission must fit into the overarching plan of the infantry task force. (Here) that is to secure Zabul Province with the purpose of effective self-governance."

Within the parameters of the enduring mission, there are two main reasons for conducting missions, he said.

"We will do a mission if it will help the security situation in the region or if it will help with the infrastructure and development of the area," said Wilson.

If there is anti-Coalition militant activity in an area, the leaders plan a mission to secure the area, he said. Or, if there is a need for Coalition help for infrastructure development, that is

where the Soldiers are sent.

"The enemy has a vote on any mission," said Capt. Dan Blackmon, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., fire support officer and mission planner. "We set the basics of the plan and are able to shift targets if necessary, depending on enemy activity."

The Coalition forces work closely with local government officials in the 11 Zabul districts to help improve security.

"It's a large area to cover," said Wilson. Working closely with the district leaders makes it easier to prioritize missions and helps the officials trust the Coalition forces.

"All operations are sanctioned by the Afghan leadership," he said. "He's in charge. We are just here to help him create a stable environment. We've always been in agreement with the officials. There is a mutual understanding, cooperation and participation with provincial government officials."

The changing face of the battlefield has kept the mission planners busy.

"We are in the stabilization and support operations," said Wilson. "We aren't just planning operations for our battalion of infantrymen. We are

planning in a very diverse atmosphere."

The planners must coordinate for all the different units involved in any one operation. Every operation has a contingent from the Afghan National Army, local police, local government officials and several Coalition units.

"We have to plan for the cross-cultural issues that arise, such as language and religious observance," said Wilson.

The different Coalition forces working in the area must all be on the same sheet of music about the missions going on in the region.

"The challenge is planning missions that involve everyone and help meet the individual goals each unit is responsible for," said Wilson.

The infantry task force is responsible for coordinating the action and ensuring everyone is going in the same direction.

The Soldiers working in the planning department have many challenges. Working in this multi-unit, multinational environment can pose problems, but also provides motivation.

"It's a challenge to get everyone in line, going in the same direction," said Capt. Rob Wolfe, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., assistant operations officer for plans. "But working with the Afghans is so motivating. This is their fight just as much as ours, and seeing them fight for their freedom is amazing."

An environment where the enemy often pops up in small groups throughout the region makes planning difficult.

"A good plan has to be flexible," said Wolfe. "If it's locked and rigid it will fail."

With continuous intelligence gathering, the target of a mission may change at any moment.

"We've had a change of objective after the helicopter was in flight," said Wolfe. "We shifted mission in flight."

A good plan can be used even if situations change, said Blackmon.

"The basics of the plan don't change much. The success or failure of a plan is in the execution," he said. "It's the junior leaders on the ground that make the plan work."

The Soldiers on the ground depend on a good plan that encompasses all the different units involved.

The main goal of planning is getting everybody aimed at the same end state, said Wolfe. "The Soldiers and Afghan forces are the ones completing the missions. We owe them a good plan."

Camp Cunningham mail team delivers

Story and photo by
Capt. Catie Hague
445th Air Expeditionary Wing



Members of the Air Force's mail team at Bagram work together to keep the mail flowing to their fellow Airmen.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Delivering messages from home to more than 700 deployed Airmen is a “mission of morale” being carried out on a daily basis by Camp Cunningham’s mail team.

Anywhere from seven to 20 pallets arrive at Bagram Airfield every day — about 15,000 to 50,000 pounds of mail.

“We have a core team of seven Airmen,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Lorenzo Smartt, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group administrator. “But when the big shipments come in, like around special holidays, we can easily have up to 20 people voluntarily help out.”

Depending on the number of pallets, unloading and distributing mail takes about three to five hours.

Not all the mail is specifically for Camp Cunningham residents, said Smartt.

“Members of the Army, Marines and Air Force gather at the Bagram Post office to off-load pallets and separate mail by service and unit,” he said.

“It’s a lot of work without much credit, but it’s all worth it when we realize how happy people are to see us coming,” said Smartt.

The mail team at Bagram is a great joint success story, according to Air Force Col. Rita Meyer, 455th EMSG commander.

“Men and women from every service join together as a team of volunteers to ensure that letters and care packages get pushed out to their final destination,” she said.

“There is nothing more important to the morale of our deployed troops than seeing a letter or package postmarked from home,” she said. “It’s the work of our mail team behind the scenes that provides us with that piece of happiness — a message of support.”

“There is nothing more important to the morale of our deployed troops than seeing a letter or package postmarked from home.”

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari

What is your name?

Esm-e-shoma chest?

(Ess-may show-mah cheest)

Pashtu

Stasu noom sa da?

(Stah-sue newm suh dah)

Under the Taliban regime, boys were allowed to pursue education, but girls were forbidden education. Parents who wanted their daughters educated had to arrange for private tutoring in informal groups at home. Today, boys and girls attend separate schools, and in some of the country’s major provinces, they attend universities together.

Freedom Watch

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**Together –
We Will Succeed!**